his goal, namely the consolidation of his work, he would gladly co-operate with his foe of yesterday or break with a friend." In a word Bismarck was a pure realist and he never pretended to be anything else.

The *detente* which began in 1877 was approved by the greatest of French citizens. Gambetta's longing for the recovery of the provinces remained, but after the crisis of 1875 the possibility of winning them by negotiation occupied his thoughts. He was no longer *ttefoufurieux* he had seemed to Thiers. We can trace the evolution of his thought in his correspondence with Ranc and in the sparkling memoirs of his friend and hostess, Mme Adam. " If by diplomacy we can avoid or at least postpone the conflict,'* he wrote in September, 1875, "should we not try it? But how? Our colonies. Which is the best, to keep our distant possessions or our future generations? Let us face this cruel dilemma—the lives of young France or portions of our colonial territory. Ought we not to profit by the taste of Germany for colonies ? We have what they want. Is that not our chance ? " The unfounded rumour that Bismarck was about to visit Paris for political conversations in December, 1875, filled him with excitement. " Must I stand aloof? Is it really my duty as a Frenchman ? You know the dreams of a colonial future for his people, and his country is strong, perhaps invincible. Should we not avoid the noble but fruitless sacrifice of our young men whose death would en-feeble France for ever ? " When Bismarck announced in 1878 that a Congress would meet at Berlin, Gambetta, after brief hesitation, favoured participation. " We must profit by the rival ambitions to declare our legitimate demands and create an agreement." His readiness to meet the monster, as he called him, had now grown into eagerness. At the

end of 1877 Count Henckel von Donnersmarck, returning to Paris where he had lived under the Second Empire, wrote to Bismarck, " I guarantee to bring Gambetta to Varzin on a public or a private visit, whichever you prefer. He will propose to you a rap-prochement and collaboration with France." The Chancellor evaded a reply; but when the proposal was renewed in April 1878, he accepted it, and a *rendezvous* was arranged for April 30 at Berlin. At the kst moment, however, Gambetta drew back. " Man proposes, Parliament .disposes," he wrote to Henckel on April 18. " When I readily accepted yesterday I did not allow for the unexpected. The questions relating to the Ministry of War have become increasingly important. I cannot abandon